



NORTH of SCOTLAND AREA ROADS AUTHORITIES & UTILITIES COMMITTEE

Minutes of the QUARTERLY MEETING

Date: Wednesday 6th May 2020

Meeting held online on MSTEAMS

Present:

Tommy Deans (NoSRAUC Chair)	T.D.	BEAR Scotland N.E. / N.W.
Kevin Abercrombie	K.A.	Aberdeen City Council
David Armitage	D.J.A.	Aberdeenshire Council
Philip Burnett	P.B.	SGN
Angus Carmichael	A.C.	Scottish Road Works Commissioner
Scott Coull	S.C.	SGN
Gerry Cullen	G.C.	Traffic Scotland
Karyn Davidson	K.D.	Vodafone
Jane Dunlop	J.D.	O.S.R.W.C.
Stephen Fisher	S.F.	Century Link (By VC Link)
Jim Forbes	J.F.	CityFibre
Darren Grant	D.G.	SSEN
Mike Gray	M.G.	BEAR Scotland N.W.
Carol Griffiths	C.G.	Lastmile
David Hearty	D.H.	MBNL / EE
Fiona McInnes	F.McI.	Scottish Water
Donald Macleay	D.A.Macl.	Western Isles Council
Duncan MacLennan	D.MacL.	Openreach
Alison MacLeod	A.MacL.	The Highland Council
Craig McQueen	C.McQ.	Scottish Water
Hazel Moore	H.M.	BEAR Scotland NE
Kevin Price	K.P.	The Moray Council
Kat Quane	K.Q.	Transport Scotland
Neil Robertson	N.R.	Shetland Islands Council
Iain Ross	I.R.	O.S.R.W.C.
Kenny Roy	K.R.	Orkney Islands Council (By VC Link)
Ruth Scott	R.S.	SSE Telecom
Antony Thorpe	A.T.	Balfour Beatty (AWPR O & M)

In Attendance:

George Borthwick	G.B.	Secretary
Stephen Scanlon	S.S.	Openreach
Robert Young	R.Y.	Scottish Government (Digital Scotland)

Apologies:

Derek Smith	D.S.	The Moray Council
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1. Welcome and Introductions

Tommy Deans (BEAR Scotland), welcomed all to the meeting and gave an indication of how he intended to manage the meeting. This meeting would give other Chairs in the Community an indication of the viability of holding virtual meetings. It would be a starting point on which to build on using more of the facilities available in the package not to forget the possible use of other available packages. H.M. would upload papers to the screen i.e. when needed for discussion.

There was an ongoing need for discussion between the Members of the Community, especially to deal with the anticipated rush of activity to complete programmes of essential works in a short period once the lockdown was eased. Virtual meetings would assist in this process.

T.D.'s intention was to run Items 3, 7 and 8 as one Item allowing each Organisation to contribute with a brief report. There would be the opportunity to discuss issues where required but all were asked to keep their input brief and to the point.

Apologies were recorded as above.

2. Minute of the last Meeting held on 5th February 2020

a. Accuracy

The Minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 5th February 2020 in The Learning Centre Meeting Room, The Highland Archive Building, Bught Road, Inverness, IV3 5SS were agreed as read.

b. Matters Arising

Matters arising from the previous meeting are recorded on the Action Tracking Summary.

3. Local RAUC Reports

This Item is dealt with in the joint Item 3, 7, and 8 below.

4. Matters Arising from RAUC(S) Meeting – 4th March 2020

The previously circulated draft Minutes were commented on as follows: -

- The revisions made by Aberdeenshire to their Road Construction Consent conditions to cover the requirement for plant to be laid in the new development roads before the final surfacing was laid could now be viewed on the Aberdeenshire web site. If contacted, D.J.A. would endeavour to answer any queries on this topic.
- A presentation was given on the early arrangements for the Euro Championships and the COP 26 Conference in Glasgow which were both likely to create travel issues. Due to the Covid-19 problems the two events have been cancelled for this year and will now be run in 2021.
- There was still a need for a R.A. Representative on the SROR Working Group following the resignation of Tony Black and John MacLennan. All R.A. Representatives should consider if they can volunteer for the vacancies or if there is a suitable member of their staff who could join the group. **Action – R.As**
- T.T.R.Os – Scottish Water asked all R.As to agree T.T.R.Os with them and not their Contractor / Agent.
- Depth of Plant in the Verge – The meeting considered that this Item was dealt with and was closed however since then Openreach had asked NoSRAUC to review the matter

again. The Chair suggested that the paper submitted to him by Openreach be passed directly on to RAUC(S). The Committee agreed this action and T.D. will pass the paper to the Secretary for addition to the RAUC(S) Agenda. **Action – T.D. / Secretary**

- RAUC(S) Community Meeting Frequency – The Working Group are continuing their review of this matter and will try to submit a recommendation to the meeting in June.
- Safety Bulletins – The committee agreed that the circulation of safety Bulletins was helpful to the Community and should be continued with all Organisations being asked to share their Safety issues / bulletins with the wider Community in an effort to reduce accidents.

a) RAUC(S) Working Group Recruitment

The schedule is currently up to date including the vacancies in the SROR. See comment above on the requirement for R.A. Representation on the SROR Working Group

5. National & Local Coring Update

i. National Coring Update

A short verbal update report was given to the meeting as follows: -

- The Working Group met in the last week to review the current status of the programme.
- All coring has been completed and but work is still needed in some Authorities to ensure that the Appendices A and B match with the results recorded on the Register. This programme is running on and requires early action by all to ensure all records match and are confirmed with the S.U.s.
- An Issue occurred in Aberdeenshire / City where some cores taken by Transport Scotland had transferred to the Council R.A. due to the roads being de-trunked.
- The current figure for passes nationally is 87.3% (NoSRAUC 86.6%) which is an improvement on the last programme but does not quite reach the required 90%.
- All with tasks to complete should do so as a matter of urgency.

ii. Local Coring Programmes Update

The Scottish Water internal programme has been on hold to date during the Covid-19 outbreak but will resume.

6. SRWC Report & Performance

a. SRWC Report

J.D. referred all to the previously circulated Bulleting and Dashboard from the Commissioner's office which were taken as read: -

- A revised Dashboard had been circulated due to a problem with the formatting.
- All with performance in the red should comment to the Commissioner's Office indicating the reason or the action being taken to improve the performance.
- If there were any queries about the Dashboard or Bulletin, they should be emailed to the enquiries email address.

b) SRWC Indicators and Statistics Reports

- See Item No. 6a above.

b. Improvement Notices – Action Tracking

It was noted that no Improvement Notices had been issued in the NoSRAUC Area in the last Quarter.

Items Nos 3 / 7 / 8 Local RAUC Reports / Safety / Information on Strategic Programmes of Works

Transport Scotland

K.Q. provided the following verbal update: -

Due to the Covid-19 crisis there was a delay in progressing the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 commencement schedule and introduction of the various sections of legislation. It is at present predicted that the process will be delayed by about 3 months.

K.Q. thanked the Commissioner for his assistance with making the Community aware of Covid-19 matters via his Web Site.

All should be aware that during the crisis there may be differences in the way the crisis is being managed north and south of the border. Reference should be made to information being issued by the Scottish Government and note there are differences between the requirements for Road / S.U. works from those laid down for the general construction industry. The information available will be updated with any revisions which are issued including on the Commissioner's Web Site.

It was noted that in Scotland the Register allows the works taking place to be monitored and managed.

K.Q. offered to take any queries and endeavour to get a response out.

A request is being issued for an information log on the number of key workers being tested to be completed weekly and submitted to Scottish Government. The information to be supplied is minimal but will help in developing the way forward so all should take part in the recording process.

The environment on the Islands is being considered in the decision-making process. There is an Island Team which can deal with enquiries from the Island Councils.

Aberdeen City Council – K.A.

Compliance with the requirements of the Covid-19 regulations is generally good with only emergency works being carried out.

CityFibre have increased their operations in the City and there have been some concerns reported by the public about distancing not being observed. There was also concerns about how the public were being accommodated where sites were operational. This has been discussed with CityFibre and progress is being made to solve the issue. J.F. reported that he had not been made aware of this problem but would review it after the meeting.

Aberdeenshire – D.J.A.

There are essential works which will need to be carried out before the winter or some roads would fail. Planning was ongoing to accommodate these works. The roads programme will be

entered into the Register to allow the S.U.s to see what works are planned and for coordination. The S.U.s were asked to record their programmes if they have not already done so.

Policies are being prepared to deal with working in lockdown or what follows.

Road Closures are being reviewed and issued in line with standard legislation and Covid-19 Legislation. If a response is not received the S.U should contact the Council as this is likely to have been caused by home working so flexibility is needed.

Highland Council – Alison MacLeod

There were no real issues to be reported.

City Fibre are starting to work again in the Highland area and distancing between operatives on site and with members of the public will have to be met. Their programme will need to be discussed with Highland Council. J.F. indicated that CityFibre had a Policy on distancing and every effort would be made to ensure it was adhered to. Suitable signing would be used to advise the public on the need for the work.

An agreement has been made with SSSEN and SGN to invoice for FPNs on a three-monthly basis. This is to reduce the administrative cost involved on both sides when issuing invoices for small amounts. FPNs will still be reviewed and issued for accept/decline on a monthly basis, it is only the issuing of invoices that is changing. Unless any other utility expresses disagreement it is intended to deal with all FPN invoicing for all utilities in this manner in future.

Moray Council – K.P.

The number of works being carried out are low with the Council only dealing with emergencies. Openreach are carrying out works within the guidelines.

Some essential works will need to be commenced soon to be completed before the winter.

TTRO applications will be dealt with but may take longer to administer.

Orkney Islands Council – K.R.

Generally, all as above i.e. programmes being prepared for work post lockdown. The Surface Dressing programme had been cancelled. Verge maintenance was due to commence.

Openreach were carrying out works.

Shetland islands Council – N.R.

As above.

Openreach (2 schemes) and Scottish Water (1 scheme) have been given clearance to proceed.

Western Isles Council – D.McL.

As above with Openreach carrying out some work.

The quarries are all shut down so there are no materials available on the Islands.

Aberdeen Western Peripheral Road – A.T.

Only Cat 1 defects repairs are being carried out with distancing requirements observed.

Digital Scotland – R.Y.

DSBB Programme is now being finalised, with the target of premises connected now exceeded.

For the Rest of Scotland programme there are now only 2 Fibre to the Cabinet (FTTC) completions outstanding, along with under 30 Fibre to the Premise (FTTP) installations remaining. All to be completed by the end of May. The HIE programme will conclude in September.

Further deployment called Reaching for 100% (R100) will be in three Contracts – North, Central and South. Councils in the North of Scotland are within the North Contract Area.

BT/Openreach have been awarded the Central and South Contracts.

The preferred bidder for the North Contract has still to be announced. This is expected sometime later this year, with mobilisation to follow. The R100 Programme team will initiate meetings with all Roads Authorities in Scotland to discuss the deployment of the works.

Currently Openreach are continuing to work on telecoms infrastructure during COVID-19 lockdown. They are undertaking their own risk assessment for access to/from sites and safe working on sites. We have assessed that over 97% of the remaining DSSB works are in rural areas. Specific SRWR noticing requirements are in place. Thanks to the Roads Authorities for their assistance in ensuring these works are proceeding.

BEAR Scotland N.E. - H.M.

Currently dealing with emergencies only.

The 2020 / 21 programme had been circulated to the meeting but without start dates.

Some S.U.s had problems with the policies but these had generally been dealt with using cross referencing the Covid-19 Policies and the Register.

The use of additional Covid-19 signing was being requested.

There was a need for meetings to take place to consider the works programmes required post lockdown.

BEAR Scotland N.W. – M.G.

All roads were open to traffic.

Some Operatives have been put on furlough.

There was an improvement in the quality of Notices being received.

All should remember the extra requirements when working near hospitals, care homes, schools, supermarkets etc. Advice is required on specific signing and working arrangements before work can commence.

There will be a work spike post lockdown.

All events have been cancelled so relevant traffic orders / restrictions have also been cancelled.

Due to lower traffic volumes alternative working arrangements on traffic sensitive routes can be considered.

Transport Scotland - G.C.

Not present

Scottish Water – F.McI.

Generally home working.

The works programme being carried out is restricted.

Reprogramming the works which have been delayed is ongoing including predesigning the T.M.

Cancelled TTROs will need to be rearranged.

First time reinstatements are being used wherever possible.

The staff are tidying up the various to do lists on the Register.

Scottish Water – C.McQ.

Capital works are closed down.

T.M. on abandoned works is being inspected and maintained.

It is anticipated that social distancing will be ongoing for a period which will further affect when schemes can get started.

More road closures are expected to accommodate distancing for both the operatives and the public.

Work in urban areas are more difficult and additional signing will be required to deal with the Covid-19 working arrangements.

K.Q. commented that the 2m distancing is not specified in the guidance for road works but is in the construction guidance. She will keep all updated via the Commissioner's web site. Flexibility and innovation is required and this should be shared.

SGN - Scott Coull

Safety critical works are ongoing.

The safety policies are in place and signs have been ordered for the sites and the vehicles.

One of the main problems is accommodating the pedestrians.

SSEN and SSET – Ruth Scott

All as above with concern about the restart and planning for it.

Openreach – D.MacL.

Emergency, Urgent and Essential works being dealt with.

The safety guidance is in place and have been advised to the all within the Organisation. This has also been circulated to the R.As.

Daily audits are carried out to ensure safety in relation to Covid-19. This is recorded on the Notices.

The working is generally as above.

Vodaphone – K.D.

All working from home at present.

Vandalism to their installations had increased during April.

Inspections are carried out to ensure safe working. High vis vests have been issued with “Key Worker” on the back of them.

Planning is ongoing for the works to restart when that is possible.

CityFibre – J.F.

Works on the expansion of the network is on hold.

Dealing with repairs, corrections and upgrade to existing plant.

Work reduced to about 10% of the normal level.

SGN are assisting with provision of materials when required.

Century Link – D.H.

Safety is the main focus with risk statements in place. PPE is available and is being used.

The Key Workers have been provided with letters which can be handed out to members of the public.

There are concerns expressed by some members of the public about the rollout of 5G.

TEAMS will be used for coordination meetings.

Sanitiser is being avoided with soap and water being provided.

Last Mile C.G.

All as above with staff training on Safe Working procedures.

Openreach – S.S.

S.S. thanked Tommy for allowing him to join the meeting in order to get experience of how the online event would run in preparation for the WoS Area Meeting later in May.

Scottish Road Works Commissioner

There were no major changes in Legislation relating to the requirement to commence works and it was up to the Organisation to decide if works need to be commenced. His office would be monitoring the Register as usual and may if considered necessary query why a scheme had commenced.

The meeting had gone well but there were pockets of poor Wi-Fi connectivity.

He had no doubt that early starts would rise considerably when lockdown eased and programmes were being issued again. He recommended the use of potential works to aid coordination.

He encouraged all to take some time to tidy up their To Do lists.

Make sure the quality of input to the Register does not slip due to home working etc.

Although all appeared to be dealing with distancing, he asked all to heed the advice and any revisions being issued.

O.S.R.W.C. – J.D.

J.D. reported that the Office had been contacted by MACS regarding the issues of dealing with mobility and for dealing with persons with a disability during the Covid-19 crisis. The request was to remember to provide safe passage through sites now, and at all times. J.D. will issue information via the Secretary.

Action – J.D. - Secretary

9. Proposed Changes to Road Designations

No designation changes reported.

10. Management and Operation of the SRWR

The previously issued report was taken as read with the following comments: -

- The delay to the launch of the new Register system was being monitored. The Community will be given three weeks' notice of the changeover once it is known.
- A reminder was issued that no personal details should be included in any Notice even with home working etc.
- The comment on work being Essential should be recorded in the Works Description text box.

a. Gazetteer Report

Covered by Dashboard and Bulletin.

b. Systems Assurance Team

Covered by Dashboard and Bulletin,

c. Community Apparatus VAULT

Covered by Dashboard and Bulletin,

11. AOCB

a. List of Plant Protection Systems

The list would be circulated to each meeting and all were asked to check the data and advise the Secretary of any additional information or changes so that it could be kept up to date on the Web.

b. Emergency Contact Details

The list would be circulated to each meeting and all were asked to check the data and advise the Secretary of any additional information or changes so that it could be kept up to date on the Web.

c. Distancing

The distancing provision will be an issue which will vary from site to site. All should speak to each other to learn from mistakes and good practice. All should note the paper issued recently by Openreach. Items which need to be reviewed in commencing work are the urgency, distancing and the need for PPE.

J.F. commented that on any site the arrangements should be as good as they can be and all should learn as they go on. Use of risk assessment on sites will help to achieve safe working environments for all.

Pragmatism is needed when working. Pedestrians will in general try to maintain distancing but that needs to be accommodated. THINK DIFFERENT – THINK SAFE.

All should communicate with the public and with the community.

12. Date and Venue of Next Meeting

The Next Meeting will be held on **Wednesday 5th August 2020 (10.30 for 11.00)**

VENUE - The Beach Ballroom, Beach Promenade, Aberdeen, AB24 5NR (but this will be confirmed in due course).

Future Meetings: -

November Meeting*** Wednesday 4th November 2020

The Venues are arranged for 10.30am with the meeting starting at 11.00am

Meeting Venues to be confirmed: -

** The Learning Centre Meeting Room, The Highland Archive Building, Bught Road
Inverness, IV3 5SS

*** The Beach Ballroom, Beach Promenade, Aberdeen, AB24 5NR

The Meeting Closed at 12.45